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of the *new vigour** thus thrown into our representative body, would *insure*—yes, the word is “*insure*,”—that body having the power and the inclination—yes, “*power*,” and “*inclination*,” are really the words,—“to do all the rest by a *legislative process*. We aim at no partial or moderate regeneration *eventually*; and at one blow would do away all the *root* of the evil, but leave the *branches to wither*: you, on the contrary, would *legislate for yourselves*; and do away all corruption, but your own, *root and branch*.” Here, by the way, as is not very uncommon in the warmth of controversy, the irregularity *untruly imputed* to opponents is the very irregularity *actually practised* by the accusing parties. But of this more fully in its proper place.

In this place, only one additional word. What is the essential difference, so as to be an object of blame, between *lopping off* at once a branch of corruption, or *extinguishing its life* and leaving it to “*wither?*”

Now, considering unlucky coincidences and all circumstances, will it not, think you, be expedient to remove obscurity, by explaining what is the real meaning of your published document? Whether yourself and present associates, on whose behalf the freeholders of Yorkshire are addressed, really mean their *moderate* reform to lead us in the end to a *radical* reform, according to those “*genuine principles of the constitution*” spoken of in your “*advertisement*” or not? Will it not, I ask, be expedient that your true meaning shall be distinctly avowed? And here I will only stop to ask one farther question—“Would the eloquence of angels be able to persuade the strong-minded freeholders of Yorkshire, that, in totally disregarding the intrinsic wisdom of the foregoing declaration of the Friends of the People, in an address composed after 15 years more experience than you, in 1780, had enjoyed, you, and their other leaders, in 1814, had acted wisely?”

I remain, dear Sir, very truly your friend and servant,

JOHN CARTWRIGHT.

Nov. 20, 1815.

LETTER III.
Strike, but hear!

DEAR SIR,—Were Yorkshire, in what you now propose, alone concerned, were

the object a matter of mere local interest, affecting none but yourselves, the interference of a stranger would be impertinent. But as you are endeavouring to lay in Yorkshire the foundation of a scheme you intend shall operate on the whole nation, it is the duty of every Englishman who thinks you in error, and who has solid arguments to produce for holding that opinion, to expostulate with yourself, and to reason with his Yorkshire fellow countrymen, for averting the evils he foresees from an adoption of that scheme. It is on this account I am anxious for a full explanation. “In case the very imperfect reform you now meditate, shall be obtained, do you mean there to ‘*abide?*’” Or does your word “*abide*” merely mean, that the measure to which you now allude, to the exclusion of all others, you will, of a certainty, *propose*, giving to any other proposition that may be moved in the way of amendment—and moved with whatever knowledge and wisdom, your determined opposition?

Every one, my dear Sir, must allow, that the question upon which we are divided, involves in it the very happiness or misery of our country, perhaps to the latest generations. As such, I deem it to deserve a discussion of the utmost temper and moderation, and think it ought to be decided rather by argument than by anger. How, on this point, am I to judge of *your* opinion, and *your* language, when you speak of “*dangerous innovations*,” but without either description or proof, “*which are strenuously persisted in by some rash men*,” who “*scruple not to propose those innovations to multitudes of the very lowest classes of society in London, and in the late unhappily disturbed counties*.” “*Their measures*” you add, “*you decidedly disapprove and reject*.” After indulging in a fanciful, and as I conceive, totally incorrect view of the notions and the conduct of one person particularly alluded to, and of the legitimate consequences of that conduct, you proceed,—“*and for a visionary improvement, which is UNATTAINABLE at present, as we judge, by any peaceful means, these mistaken enthusiasm would obstinately reject a great PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT, sanctioned by the ablest Statesmen of our country*.” Nor do you lose sight of these “*rash men*,” these “*mistaken enthusiasts*,” or rather the one person particularly pointed at, until, in the way of contrast with the “*most guarded measures*,” which are,

* “*Newly infused vigour*,”—Address.

it seems, to emanate from the "temperate zeal" of yourself and others, you express an apprehension that the conduct you condemn is likely to produce "anarchy and revolutionary rage;" to which you, I must needs think unjustifiably, say, "there is but too visible a tendency in the *capital*, and some parts of the country;" as well as a train of confusions and mischiefs of another description, which would leave our constitution without an existence.

Now, my dear Sir, that *he* who thus writes, is better qualified than *him* of whom he thus writes, to become an efficient member, with Lords and Dukes, of a "wealthy association," is certainly most true; and very possibly he may also have a deeper and more familiar acquaintance with our present subject—REPRESENTATION—may have watched over it with more ardour and more success; may have elucidated more of its obscurities; have put to shame more of its enemies; and raised it up more friends; or with more sagacity and a deeper penetration, he may have foreseen the respective consequences of *no* reform, of *mock* reform, and of *half* reform; and may also have baffled more practices against *constitutional* reform: yet I still lean to the opinion, that the question mooted between you and him had better be decided by argument than by anger.

If ever rashness, or obstinacy in *wrong* bore sway in the temper of the party so portrayed in the address, he, however, persuades himself, that on his death-bed, when, at least, those disturbers of the mind will probably have melted away, should but intellect then remain, a recollection of his own conduct respecting the "disturbed counties" will afford him no small Christian consolation.

For removing ignorance of his motives, prejudices against his proceeding, and that moral and political mistiness, nearly amounting to darkness, through which the transaction has been viewed, he refers to a letter he wrote to a person of great consideration, a copy of which (but without that person's name) he published in Hurst's Wakefield and Halifax Journal, of the 5th of February, 1813, as well as in the Leeds Mercury, about the same time; a letter which, it seems, was so well thought of, as to be re-published in the form of a pamphlet, by Willan and Campbell, of Halifax, as the author learned by receiving two copies as a present to him; and he likewise refers to three let-

ters he published in the Nottingham Review, in December, 1811, and January, 1812. Besides which, called on as he now is, his fourth *public* letter of the present series will be a copy of his *private* one to yourself, of the 3d of December, 1812; explaining the views he had taken of the subject, and the motives by which he was actuated while meditating that tour; as well as stating his *reasons*, and reasons he thinks he did state, why he thought it right to act rather on his own opinion than on yours, as in very friendly terms expressed in your letter of the 11th of November, 1812.

What, my dear Sir, shall we say to the consistency of him, who, in the same breath in which he nobly pleads for an "*absolute liberty of conscience*" in all religious concerns, yet rebukes with something very like intolerance, those who, differing from him in *political* opinion, claim either *freedom of action, or of thought*? In such a proceeding we can only lament too close an imitation of that renowned Defender of the Faith, Henry VIII.; that chip of the same block, his daughter Elizabeth; the Courts and the Bishops, during the first age of Church Reformation. He, like them, seems to tolerate his own dogmas alone, be they ever so crude, to the rejection of all others, be they ever so constitutional. In the infancy of Church Reformation, by means of a "*wealthy association*," that is, of those in power, associated with all those who courted the powerful, partook of their good things, and echoed their sentiments, those *unscriptural* creeds, tests, articles, and errors, contrary to the genuine constitution of Christianity, took root, which by converting a Christian church into a piece of State machinery, and filling it with endless schisms, became the prolific seeds of tyranny, vice, and misery, and proved the bane of true religion.

Not warned by the fatal example, we now, alas! in our days of far greater light and knowledge, see certain crude dogmas, which, in the very *infancy* of political reform, occurred to *inexperience*, as pertinaciously adhered to as the Athanasian Creed is clung to by the blindest son of orthodoxy.

That you, my dear Sir, of whom it is known, that although a Minister of the English Church, you do not "abide" by all the errors which she through *inexperience* imbibed, and through pride and obstinacy retains, it is the more remarkable that you should now have taken a *fixed resolution* to

"abide" by an error of *political inexperience*, imbibed in the very cradled infancy of reform. May it not be feared that this so singular resolution has proceeded from your having viewed your object only through glasses borrowed of a jealous aristocracy, green and opaque almost to darkness, like those with which weak eyes view the sun; for how else can you, at this day of full maturity, contemplate that which was in fact a mere first, feeble, tottering step of reform in its *infancy*; and if I were not misinformed, taken in *leading strings*, as a ripe measure at this time worthy of adoption? Ought not Yorkshire now to say, "when I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things?"

Hath it never crossed your imagination, that whenever the adult mind of your country shall be called on for its opinion on the question of REPRESENTATION, around which as the sun and soul of our system, Peace, Catholic Emancipation, Religious Liberty, and a Free Press, as subordinate planets, all revolve; hath it I ask, never yet crossed your imagination, that, under all present circumstances and recollections, that same potent *Yorkshire* mind will now "take the liberty to declare its resolution" of going into the consideration of the *whole* question at once, free as the air that sweeps your mountain tops? *Limitations! Restrictions* in reasoning on self-preservation! No; that day I trust is past.

Would it, my good Sir, for preventing mutual assaults during the discussion, become "the independence and dignity" of the Freeholders of your county, to repair to the Castle-yard, like felons, in *fetters* and *hand-cuffs*? Will they, then, think you, attend with their intellects *chained* and their mouths *gagged*? Mean you to command the mental ocean, that only so far it flow, and no farther? Will you attempt to turn aside the current of the reforming wind, bearing on its wings truth and justice? Or, can you bind the sweet influences of patriot eloquence? Believe it not!

There is, it is too true, still left a rump of that body, whose feminine and feverish mind, some twenty years ago, took the phrenzy of alarm. These unhappy beings, even to this day, cannot open their lips on *English* reform, but as a *French* demon, by which they are possessed, gives them utterance. Until, by the compas-

sionate apostles of freedom, preaching salvation by the Constitution, that devil be cast out, the sufferers cannot recover the full use of their reason. The possessed seem now much troubled, that their devil can no longer be made to enter into those they esteem a swinish multitude. Among the symptoms of their malady, we find it a perpetual and a prominent idea, that it is the *nature* of petitioning to aggravate the evil petitioned against; that petitioning tends to "mischiefs, calamity, and ruin;" that its object is "UNATTAINABLE;" that consequently it leads only to a "bloody struggle," "civil war," "inevitable revolution," and the "loss of liberty." In reply, I ask only two simple questions; first, are "civil war" and "revolution" most likely to follow, from misery finding vent through the sacred and hope-inspiring practice of *petitioning*, justly accounted the brightest jewel in the tiara of the Constitution; or from the exercise of tyranny, terror, and persecution, for the express purpose of locking up in the popular bosom all its griefs and agitating passions, keeping down the spirit of reform, and stifling the voice of complaint? And, 2dly, "WHAT IS TO BECOME OF ENGLISH LIBERTY, IF WE DO NOT PETITION?"

Gracious Heaven! Have we not yet paid dearly enough for being subservient to the infernal wickedness of an apostate, who *pretended alarm*, and for the folly of his dupes? Instead of composing the mind of England, instead of rendering her *united*, impregnable, prosperous, and happy, by the reform so ardently prayed for in 1795, that vile apostate and his idiot dupes, in that disgraceful year, plunged her into a bloody war on *opinions*? I will spare you, my dear Sir, the bitter, the heart-rending and blush-raising recital of what it hath already cost us.

My next, or fourth public Letter, will be a mere copy of the private one I wrote you on the 3d of December, 1812. In my fifth, I shall again speak of the tour on which you and our friend Caley are so severe. I remain, dear Sir, very truly, your friend and servant,

JOHN CARTWRIGHT.

LETTER IV.

[N.B. The present Letter was, in fact, written and sent a year ago. Its publication at this time has been made necessary by the accusatory part of Mr. Wy-